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MARVEL COMICS

MYSTERY

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THE HUMAN TORCH

"The MOTHER GOOSE ROBBERIES!"

FROM OUT OF THE PAGES OF NURSERY RHYMES STALKS A STRANGE TERROR! A CUNNING CRIMINAL ON THE LOOSE, TWISTING INNOCENT WORDS INTO SINISTER MYSTERY! THIS IS THE STORY OF THE MOST BAFFLING AND BOLD FOE EVER TO DEFY THE KEEN WITS AND NIGHT OF TORCH AND TORO, AS THEY PLUNGE INTO THE BIZARRE CASE OF "THE MOTHER GOOSE ROBBERIES!"

IN THE SILENCE OF THE NIGHT A STRANGE, STEALTHY FIGURE ENGAGES IN ROBBERY!

HA! ANOTHER OF MY TRIUMPHS! IT WILL COMPLETELY BAFFLE THE POLICE!

THE MORNING AFTER TORCH RECEIVES AN URGENT PHONE CALL.

A PRICELESS EMERSON FIRST EDITION'S BEEN STOLEN FROM MY LIBRARY SAFE.

WE'RE UP AGAINST A VERY UNUSUAL CRIMINAL, TORCH... LOOK AT THIS CARD WE FOUND NEAR THE SAFE.

I HAD A CHARMING VISIT HERE- AND HELPED MYSELF. MOTHER GOOSE.*

THIS IS THE FIFTH "MOTHER GOOSE" CARD. I'D LIKE TO LAY MY HANDS ON THAT "MONKEY"!

...AND IN EVERY CASE THAT SAME KIND OF CALLING CARD WAS LEFT. I SHOULDVE CALLED YOU IN BEFORE, TORCH... SAY, WHAT ARE YOU POKING AROUND IN THERE FOR?

I'VE FOUND SOMETHING! LOOKS LIKE MOTHER GOOSE HAS LEFT ANOTHER LITTLE LOVE-NOTE!

IT MAKES GREATER SPORT AND EXCITING FUN TO HAVE A CLUE TO PONDER ON... GOOSEY GOOSEY GANDER, WHERE DOST THOU WANDER? UPSTAIRS AND DOWNSTAIRS AND IN MY LADY'S CHAMBER.*

GOSH, THAT MUST BE A CLUE TO MOTHER GOOSE'S NEXT ROBBERY!

"UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS—MY LADY'S CHAMBER" MUST MEAN SOME RICH WOMAN'S GOING TO BE ROBBED NEXT. BUT WHO? I'M GOING BACK TO HEADQUARTERS AND TAKE AN ASPIRIN!

THE FLABBERGASTED INSPECTOR GOES, FOLLOWED BY A PONDERING TORCH AND TORO!

I DON'T THINK THE RHYME MEANS A WEALTHY WOMAN'S TO BE ROBBED. MOTHER GOOSE SEEMS TO BE A VERY CLEVER CRIMINAL— I'VE A HUNCH THAT POEM HAS A LESS OBVIOUS MEANING!

BUT WHAT COULD IT BE? GOOSE IS "MOTHER GOOSE"...AND LADY... LADY...WOMAN...

SUDDENLY!

KID, THAT'S IT! "GOOSE WOMAN"...THAT'S THE NAME OF A FAMOUS PAINTING ON EXHIBIT AT THE FINE ARTS MUSEUM. I BET THAT'S WHAT THE RHYME MEANS! THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED 'TIL 2 O'CLOCK! MOTHER GOOSE MAY BE BREAKING IN NOW!

GOSH, LET'S GO!

SHORTLY AFTER, THE FIERY TEAM FLAMES INTO THE ART GALLERIES...

AH, WHAT A TREASURE! WHAT A PRICELESS PAINTING...AND IT'S MINE!

MOTHER GOOSE!! YOU WERE RIGHT, TORCH!

BUT A SPLIT SECOND AFTER...

FLAME OFF, TORO! QUICK!

IF THAT PAINTING HIT OUR FLAMES, IT WOULD HAVE BURNED UP! IT'S WORTH A FORTUNE LIKE EVERYTHING HERE! COME ON! AFTER MOTHER GOOSE!

I'LL OUTWIT THEM! THAT MIRROR I SAW WHEN I CAME IN...

...S THE DUO ROUNDS THE CORNER!

HE'S NOT HERE! HE'S DISAPPEARED!

HO-WHAT'S THIS? A CONCAVE MIRROR! THAT'S WHAT RE-FLECTED MOTHER GOOSE RUNNING **LEFT**-AND HE WAS REALLY GOING THE **OTHER WAY**... COME ON!

AN INTENSE SEARCH, AND..

NOT A SIGN OF HIM! MOTHER GOOSE HAS FLOWN THE COOP-AND TAKEN US FOR A LOOP!

WONDER WHAT HE'S GOING TO ROB NEXT? HE DIDN'T LEAVE ANY NEW POEM

LATER, AT THE HEAD-QUARTERS OF MOTHER GOOSE...

DO YOU HAVE TO LEAVE ANY MORE CLUE POEMS? IT'S TOO RISKY. IF IT WAS ONLY THE POLICE...THEY CAN'T FIGURE 'EM OUT... BUT THE TORCH...

THAT'S THE POINT, KING COLE! I ENJOY THIS BATTLE OF WITS WITH HIM. THE TORCH IS CLEVER, BUT **NOT** CLEVER ENOUGH TO OUTWIT MOTHER GOOSE! AND NOW TO DE-CIDE ON MY NEXT MOVE...

THE NEXT DAY, AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS...

WELL DID ANYTHING HAPPEN LAST NIGHT? I'M ITCHING TO GET MY HANDS ON HIM!

INSPECTOR! THIS ENVE-LOPE JUST CAME IN THE MAIL ADDRESSED TO THE DEPARTMENT!

ANOTHER MOTHER GOOSE MESSAGE! CAN'T MAKE HEADS OR TAILS OUT OF IT!

BUT IT MUST MEAN SOME-THING!

"PETER PIPER PICKED A PECK OF PICKLE PEPPER. A PECK OF PICKLED PEPPER PETER PIPER PICKED.

TORO, I'VE A HUNCH THAT MESSAGE REFERS TO JEWELS. HE'S GOING TO "PICK" MORE THAN ONE, AND IT'S EASIER TO LIFT JEWELS. BESIDES, HE HASN'T STOLEN ANY JEWELS YET... WE'RE GOING TO CHIFFONY'S. THEY'RE THE LEADING JEWELERS IN TOWN. IF ANYONE HAS THE INFORMATION WE NEED, THEY HAVE!

ARE THERE ANY PRECIOUS GEMS REFERRED TO AS "PEPPERS"? IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE FIND OUT!

WHY, YES! THERE ARE 3 RED RUBIES WORTH A FORTUNE CALLED THE "RED PEPPERS"... WE SOLD THEM TO MRS. LLOYD KRONITE.

WHERE DOES SHE LIVE?

NOT LONG AFTERWARDS...

NO ANSWER. WE'LL TRY THE BACK WAY!

IT'S MOTHER GOOSE! HE'S HERE ALREADY, AND HE'S GOING TO GET A SURPRISE THAT'LL GIVE HIM GOOSE-FLESH!

CAUTIOUS ENTRANCE AND A FLEY-PECKED POUCH...

GOOSEY GOOSEY GANDER- YOU WON'T WANDER- ANY MORE!

THE YOUNG MAN IS CLEVER!

TORCH!

HE NEXT INSTANT!

THANKS FOR THE WARNING, BOY!

OH-OH! MOTHER GOOSE IS ON THE RUN AGAIN!

THEY'RE GETTING CLOSE! THAT HOSE...

S THE CRIME-CRUSHING COUPLE FLAMES OUT THE DOORWAY...

HUMPTY-DUMPTY HAD A FALL — AND THAT, BRIGHT BOYS, IS NOT ALL!

SSSSSSS...

SSSSSSS...

BEFORE THE BOYS CAN REGAIN THEIR FEET...

HA! I'VE OUTWITTED YOU AGAIN! NOW I'LL PUT THE HOSE THROUGH THE WINDOW, AND RELEASE KING COLE FROM THE FIREROPES!

CRASH!!

WHEN TORCH AND TORO REVIVE, THEY QUICKLY RETURN TO THE HOUSE

GOSH, THEY GOT AWAY ALL RIGHT, WITH THE RED PEPPERS.

NOT ALL 3. HERE'S ONE. MOTHER GOOSE MUSTVE DROPPED IT IN HIS HURRY. BUT TWO RUBIES STOLEN ARE BAD ENOUGH.

MY "PEPPERS" STOLEN! I'M MRS. KRONITE. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

TORCH EXPLAINS!

OH DEAR, LITTLE DID I DREAM WHEN I GAVE THE SERVANTS THE DAY OFF... I'VE BEEN SHOPPING WITH MY SON TOO. HE'S PLAYING IN THE GARDEN NOW.

IT'S A BAD BUSINESS ALL RIGHT! COME ON, TORO. WE'LL REPORT THIS TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS.

MEANWHILE...

WHAT BEAUTIFUL RUBIES! AND WORTH A FORTUNE! BUT 2 ARE NOT ENOUGH! I **MUST** HAVE THAT 3RD ONE, AND I'M READY TO BARGAIN FOR IT! KING COLE LISTEN... THERE'S A YOUNG KRONITE BOY...

SOON AFTER, A CAR GLIDES UP A DRIVEWAY, AND...

YOU'RE COMING WITH ME!

A SHORT TIME LATER...

THIS IS MOTHER GOOSE! NO, YOU CAN'T TRACE THE CALL! IT'S FROM A PUBLIC PHONE. LISTEN CAREFULLY. I HAVE TOD KRONITE, BUT WILL RETURN HIM SAFELY IN EXCHANGE FOR THE 3RD RED PEPPER. IF MRS. KRONITE CONSENTS, INSERT A "PERSONAL" IN TONIGHT'S "HERALD-EXPRESS". THEN I WILL COMMUNICATE WITH **TORCH**.

A QUICK CONSULTATION, AND...

MY POOR CHILD! OF COURSE, I'LL GIVE UP THE RED PEPPER FOR HIS SAFE RETURN. PLEASE GET HIM BACK, TORCH!

I'LL PUT IT IN THE "PERSONAL" AT ONCE!

THAT NIGHT...

I'VE SEEN YOUR "PERSONAL"! AT MIDNIGHT, BE AT THE SOUTH END OF THE FOREST PRESERVE THAT TURNS OFF HIGHWAY A. THE BOY WILL BE WITH ME. HAVE THE RUBY, AND BY ALL MEANS COME **ALONE**. IT WILL BE A GREAT PLEASURE MEETING YOU AGAIN, TORCH!

5 MINUTES BEFORE MIDNIGHT...

STAY HERE ON THE OUTSKIRTS, TORO. I'VE GOT TO MEET HIM ALONE...

GOOD LUCK, TORCH!

ON THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT, TWO MORTAL ENEMIES MEET!

AH, THE TORCH. IT'S A GREAT DELIGHT FOR ME TO MEET AND OUTWIT A MAN OF YOUR CLEVERNESS. OF COURE, YOU'LL NEVER CAPTURE ME... YOU HAVE THE RUBY?

HERE IT IS NOW RELEASE THE BOY.

GEE, IT'S REALLY THE TORCH!

THERE HE IS! AND HERE'S...

THE TORCH DEFTLY LEAPS ASIDE!

FULL OF CHLOROFORM! I THOUGHT HE'D TRY SOMETHING... STAY HERE TOO! I'M GOING AFTER THEM!

THEY CAN'T BE FAR... WHY, THAT'S TORO CALLING! HE'S IN TROUBLE! I'D KNOW HIS VOICE ANYWHERE.

TORCH! HELP! TORCH!

FORCED TO FORSAKE HIS PURSUIT TRAIL, TO AID HIS YOUNG FRIEND, TORCH FOLLOWS THE CRY OF STRESS, AND...

FLAMING FLAMINGOES! A PHONOGRAPH RECORD WITH A REMARKABLE IMITATION OF TORO'S VOICE. A DECOY TO GET ME OFF THE TRACK! I WONDER IF I CAN STILL NAIL THEM?

TORCH! HELP!

BUT!

NO USE. THEY GOT AWAY. I'D BETTER RETURN TO TOD AND...OH, THERE'S TORO, AND JONATHAN WARE!

HI, TORCH! MR. WARE AND I MET ON THE ROAD.

I WAS VISITING A FRIEND IN A COUNTRY HOME NEARBY AND SAW TORO HERE. WHAT'S HAPPENED?

WHAT ABOUT MOTHER GOOSE?

GOT AWAY AGAIN. WARE WILL YOU DROP TOD OFF AT HIS HOME? PARK PLACE? I'D LIKE TO DO SOME MORE LOOKING WITH TORO. MAYBE MOTHER GOOSE'S HIDE-OUT IS IN THE VICINITY.

I'LL BE GLAD TO OBLIGE. COME, TOD.

MINUTES LATER...

WE'VE BEEN ALL OVER THIS TERRITORY, AND IT STILL ADDS UP TO ZERO.

SAY, WHAT'S THAT WHITE PAPER!

A MOTHER GOOSE NOTE! HE MUST HAVE LEFT IT BEFORE HE GOT AWAY!

"LONDON BRIDGE IS FALLING DOWN, FALLING DOWN, FALLING DOWN. LONDON BRIDGE IS FALLING DOWN, MY FAIR LADY."

IT'S A CLUE TO HIS NEXT ROBBERY BUT WHAT A STUMPER! TORCH, WHAT...?

I'VE JUST NOTICED TORO. THOSE FOOTPRINTS IN THE MUD. THAT "POINTED TOE" ONE IS MOTHER GOOSE'S AND THE "SQUARE TOE" IS WHAT HIS HENCHMAN WAS WEARING **BUT**...

THESE FOOTPRINTS WERE **UNDER** THE PAPER. THAT MEANS THE PAPER MUST HAVE BEEN DROPPED **AFTER** MOTHER GOOSE AND HIS HENCHMAN GOT AWAY. BUT NO ONE'S BEEN HERE SINCE THEN EXCEPT YOU AND **ME** AND JONATHAN WARE! THAT MEANS WARE'S THE **ONLY ONE** WHO COULD'VE DROPPED THE NOTE! TORO, WARE'S **OUR MAN**! WE'RE GOING PLACES - AND **FAST**!

WE'RE WE BAMBOOZLED!

TEN MINUTES LATER...

HA! DIDN'T I TELL YOU I WOULD OUTWIT TORCH AGAIN! I AM A GENIUS MY DEAR KING COLE! I LOVE BEAUTIFUL POSSESSIONS AND I CAN GET THEM!

YOU SURE ARE SMART, THE WAY YOU CAME BACK ON THE SCENE, AND EVEN TOOK THE KID HOME TO HIS MOTHER! THAT'S A LULU!

AND I WORRIED THAT YOU WERE SICKING YOUR NECK OUT...I'LL GO WITH YOU ANYPLACE

THEN, GET READY, KING COLE IT'S TIME WE MADE OUR NEXT MOVE

YOU'LL MAKE NO SUCH MOVE!

SO WE'VE FINALLY FOUND YOU OUT!

IN A SPLIT SECOND A NEW ATTACK!

RIGHT ON TIME, MY PETS!

NOW FOR THE WALL BUTTON, AND...

A HUGE METAL MISSILE FOLLOWS THE FALLING PAIR!

THEY'RE OUT COLD! IT REMINDS ME OF A RHYME! "WON'T YOU WALK INTO MY PARLOR," SAID THE SPIDER TO THE FLY, "IT'S A LOVELY PARLOR! IN IT YOU WILL DIE!"

BONG!

ULP!

QUICK KING COLE! THE IRON URN...

THE STRICKEN DUO REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS IN STRANGE SURROUNDINGS!

OH..CAN'T BREATHE CAN'T FLAME..WHAT'S THIS?

SKIN-TIGHT ASBESTOS SUITS ON YOU I HAD PREPARED THEM-AND THIS ROOM-SHOULD YOU EVER DISCOVER ME YOU CAN'T FLAME, AND IN TIME YOUR BREATHING WILL STOP!

BUT SHOULD YOU SUCCEED IN BREAKING YOUR CHAINS-WHICH I DOUBT-THIS ROOM IS ENTIRELY SURROUNDED BY PHOTO-ELECTRIC BEAMS-EVEN THE CEILING. AS I LEAVE HERE I WILL SET THE CURRENT IN MOTION. ANYONE MOVING IN OR OUT BREAKS THE CURRENT, CREATING INSTANT EXPLOSION!

TORO, IF WE COULD GET THEM TO COME IN..WARE WHISTLED, AND THEY OBEYED! I'LL DO IT, TOO!

THOSE CATS! I... CAN BARELY SEE THEM THROUGH THIS HOOD!

POOR KID WE CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER

WE CAN'T BREAK CHAINS, MAYBE (COUGH) IT'S (COUGH)

THE DESPERATE DUO USES MORE AND MORE PRECIOUS OXYGEN!

THAT BREAKS THE PHOTO-ELECTRIC TRAP!

AS TORCH GIVES WARE'S WHISTLE, THE BEASTS LEAP INTO THE ROOM, AND CONTACT THE DEADLY BEAMS!

BOOM!

JUST WHAT I WAS HOPING FOR! THE FALLING CEILING FREED OUR HANDS! WE CAN RIP OFF THESE ASBESTOS THINGS NOW, AND FLAME OUT OF HERE!

ESCAPE AT LAST! BUT A NEW PROBLEM PRESENTS ITSELF!

THEY'VE GONE ALREADY. OFF TO THEIR NEXT ROBBERY. BUT WHERE? THIS "LONDON BRIDGE" RHYME DOESN'T GIVE ME ANY IDEAS...OR DOES IT? TORO!

THE OTHER MESSAGES WERE ALL WRITTEN ON CARDS. WHY IS THIS ON NOTE PAPER? AND WHY THE TORN EDGE? THERE MUST BE MORE TO THIS RHYME. DOESN'T THE 2ND VERSE GO..."YOU STOLE MY WATCH"..."AND KEPT MY KEYS"

A CLUE SURGES IN TORCH'S MIND, AND THE POWER-PACKED TEAM IS SOON ROCKETING ON ITS WAY...

THE WATCH PALACE! IT'S FAMOUS FOR ITS COLLECTION OF EXQUISITE LUXURY WATCHES! AND THERE'S A SIGN ON THEIR SHOWCASE THAT FITS THE "KEY" ANGLE... SOMETHING ABOUT THE EXPENSIVE WATCHES BEING THE "KEYS OF TIME WELL-SPENT!"

A MOMENT LATER, GREEDY FINGERS CURL ABOUT A PRICELESS WATCH!

AH, THE DIAMOND REX - STUDDED WITH MYRIAD JEWELS!

THE TORCH!

SO YOU HAVE A MANIA FOR EXTRA-FINE THINGS, WARE, LIKE JEWELS! FROM NOW ON YOU'LL SEE PLENTY OF **ROCKS**!

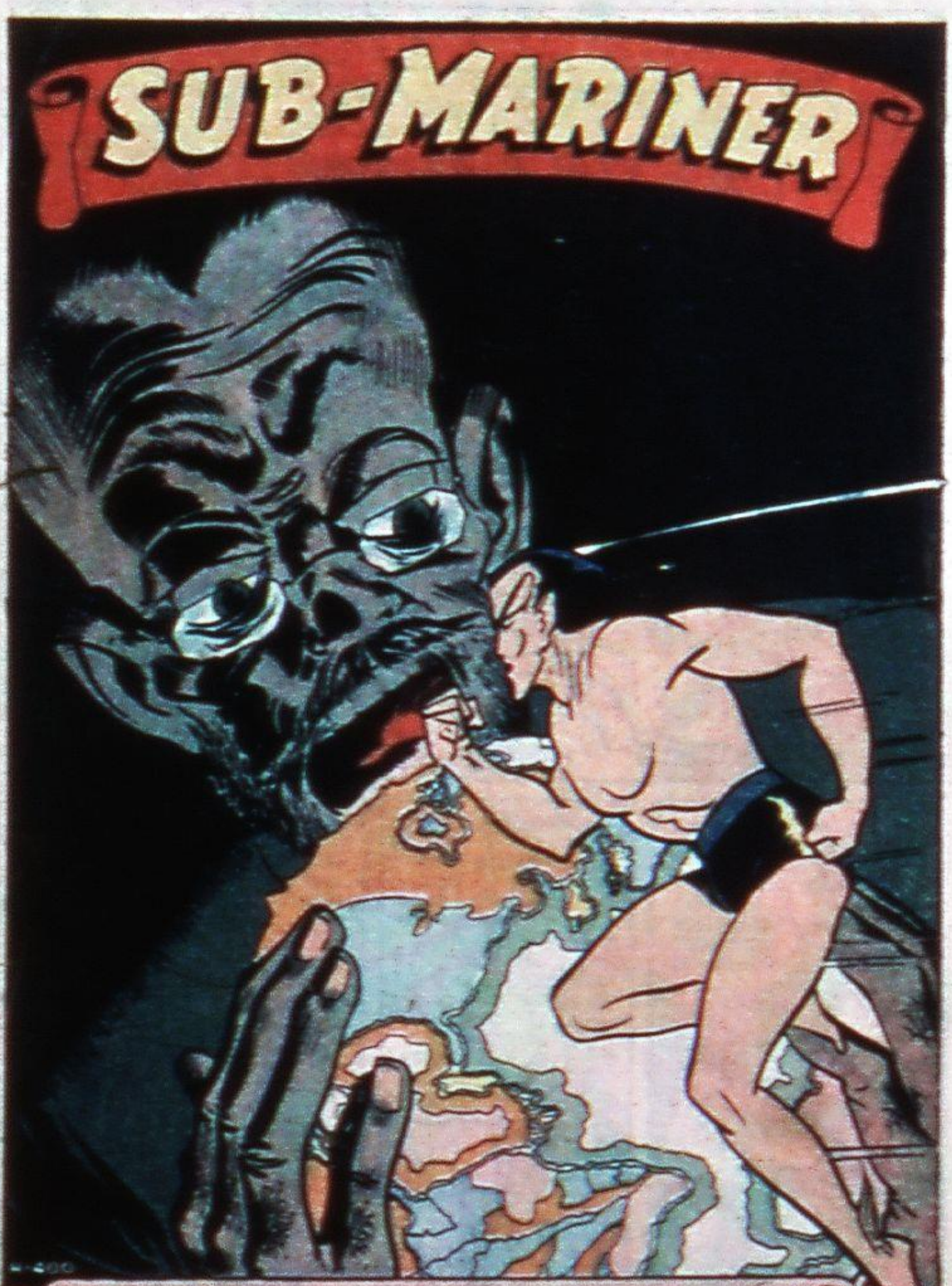
SURE! ON THE ROCK PILE OF STATE PEN!

AND THAT REMINDS ME OF THE 3RD VERSE OF "LONDON BRIDGE"..."OFF TO PRISON YOU WILL GO"... CALL THE POLICE, TORO!

MAYBE WE CAN GET THEM **NURSERY BOOKS** TO READ IN THEIR CELLS!

THE END

SUB-MARINER



THIS IS THE STORY OF A FIENDISH FOE SO CUNNING THAT HIS GRISLY GAME OF DEATH NEARLY CREATES THE MOST HORRIBLE DESTRUCTION EVER KNOWN ON EARTH! A WIZARD OF THE CENTURIES—HE IS TERRIFYING YET UNTOUCHED—UNTIL THAT GALLANT CRIME-CRUSHER SUBMARINER PUTS MIGHTY HANDS ON HIM IN AN EXPLOSIVE EXPOSE OF— "THE STRANGE DR. FEERCE!"

ONE DARK NIGHT, STRANGE VISITORS MAKE A STARTLING CALL ON....

ROGER HUNT, YOUR TIME'S UP! DEATH HAS SENT US TO YOU!

DEATH! NO—IT'S A NIGHTMARE!

IT'S REAL! AND NOW YOU'LL WRITE A FAREWELL NOTE!

SHORT MINUTES LATER, A BODY IS HURTLED INTO SPACE!

AHHHHH

WE SURE SCARED HIM INTO WRITIN' HIS SUICIDE NOTE—SHOVIN' HIM OUT THE WINDOW WAS A CINCH AFTER THAT!

WHAT A BRAIN THE DOC HAS! HA-HA-HA!

TWO WEEKS PASS—AND SUBMARINER SPEED-SWIMS INTO NEW YORK HARBOR...

NAMOR! I'VE BEEN COVERING SHIP NEWS FOR DAYS AND HAVEN'T SEEN YOU AROUND... WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?

FLORIDA, WINDING UP A BANK ROBBERY CASE—WHAT'S NEW, NEWS?

NOTHING—EXCEPT THAT THREE MILLIONAIRES COMMITTED SUICIDE IN THE PAST WEEK, AND ALL LEFT AUTHENTIC FAREWELL NOTES!

HMM...

As THE SEA PRINCE SWIMS IN DARK WATERS...

JUMPING JELLYFISH! WHAT'S THAT?

THIS JOB WAS A CINCH, TOO!

MAYBE WE AREN'T DONE WITH IT YET! LOOK WHAT'S COMIN'— TROUBLE!

I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM!

SLAP!

BOOMERANG! YOU FUGITIVES FROM A MORGUE, HAVE A SLAB!

But THE NEXT MOMENT—

THIS IRON PIECE YA WEREN'T READY FOR! SHAKE YER BONES, PALLIES! WE GOT TO BEAT IT!

CRACK!

SHORTLY—NAMOR REVIVES....

THEY'VE GONE! OF ALL THE WEIRD— WONDER WHAT THEY COULD HAVE BEEN— OH, OH THOSE CLOTHES—

A NOTE—LEFT UNDER A PAIR OF MEN'S SHOES...

My Life is over. Farewell... Death calls to me. Jonathan Root

ANOTHER APPARENT SUICIDE — I'LL DIVE IN FOR THE BODY!

NO MARKS OF VIOLENCE ON HIM! BUT DID HE JUMP OF HIS OWN FREE WILL? HMMM, THINKING OF WILLS, I'VE HEARD OF ROOT— VERY RICH MAN—WONDER WHAT KIND OF WILL HE LEFT?

AND IN ANOTHER LAW OFFICE...

A VISIT TO ROOT'S LAWYER...

ROGER HUNT WILLED ALL HIS ESTATE TO HIS RELATIVES— EXCEPT ONE PIECE OF UNDOUBTEDLY WORTHLESS SWAMP-LAND IN SOUTH AMERICA THAT WENT TO DR. FERRCE!

DR. FERRCE? WELL, THIS GETS MORE INTERESTING!

—AND MR. ROOT'S ENTIRE FORTUNE WITH PROPERTY HOLDINGS OVER THE WORLD, GOES TO HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN—EXCEPT FOR ONE PIECE OF LAND! A MOUNTAIN IN MEXICO WAS WILLED TO DR. FERRCE, A SCIENTIST!

A SCIENTIST IN THE PICTURE? THIS CALLS FOR MORE—

After three more legal inquiries—

Something's queer! Feerce is mentioned in each man's will!

And he fell heir to the strangest collection of property! A mountain, a swamp, a fishpond, and an abandoned tunnel!

His lab is over at Lookout Point! I still want an answer to that skeleton trio—and to those suicides which could've been **murder**! I'll visit the doc!

While on Lookout Point....

Doc, how about changing us to hoomans for a while! I scare meself in the mirror!

You boys have worked hard—step into the electro chamber, and relax!

Soon....

I should be—at my age! The electro-radioactive rays I perfected to give partial invisibility are small potatoes compared to my master discovery!

Doc, you're a wiz!

It's terrif—say, doc, we'll be reading in the next room!

Shortly later:

What's the matter, Joe? Ya look pale!

Do you see what I...? **Look! The fish-face!**

I don't recognize the bodies, but the faces are familiar!

CLASH!

HHA—? OHHHH!

HA-HA! IT'S K.O. GAS!

But AS THE STRICKEN SEA PERCH CRASHES TO THE FLOOR...

AH, WATER!

HERE, WHAT IS ALL THIS?

The TOUCH OF WATER REVIVES HIM, AND...

I CAN'T HAVE COMMOTION! THIS IS A PEACEFUL LABORATORY FOR WORTHY SCIENTIFIC WORK!

WHAT'S SO SCIENTIFIC ABOUT THESE PLUG-UGLIES? AND WHAT WERE THEY DOING NEAR THE SPOT WHERE JONATHAN ROOT WAS DROWNED?

WHO'S THIS ROOT?

THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW HIM! I DID, AND I'M GRIEVED TO HEAR OF HIS DEATH! AS FOR THESE YOUNG MEN, THEY'VE BEEN PARTICIPATING IN MY EXPERIMENT ON PARTIAL INVISIBILITY!

NOW WILL YOU PLEASE GO! YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO BE HERE AND NO PROOF WHATSOEVER FOR ANY SUSPICION! LEAVE MY PROPERTY!

CAN'T FIND ANYTHING THIS WAY!

ALL RIGHT! MY MISTAKE!

IN MOMENTS:

HE'S SNEAKING AWAY! IT'S TIME FOR YOU BOYS TO DEAL WITH LOMAX! DRIVE OUT THROUGH THE UNDERGROUND PASSAGE — IN CASE FISHFACE DECIDES TO KEEP AN EYE ON THIS PLACE!

FROM A BASEMENT GARAGE TO THE HIGHWAY GLIDES A BLACK CAR, CARRYING THE TERRIBLE TRIO, AND....

THEY DON'T KNOW I SWAM UNDERWATER BACK TO THE LAB! HOOKED ON—JUST IN TIME!

Later:

I'M PRETTY SURE THEY'RE KILLERS — BUT BEST PROOF IS TO CATCH THEM AT IT! MUM, WE'RE STOPPING!

INSIDE:

WRITE YOUR SUICIDE NOTE, LOMAX, THAT YOU'RE GOING TO SWALLOW POISON — OR ELSE WE'LL USE MEANS OF MAKING YOU DO SO!

NO! NO! I'LL WRITE!

THOSE NIGHTMARES HAVE GONE FAR ENOUGH!

CRASH!

SO YOU CREATE THE "SUICIDE" — AND I'VE GOT MY PROOF!

SLOWLY:

BUT YOU'LL NEVER SPILL IT! THESE DARTS ARE POISONED!

OH, THEY'VE GONE! YOU SAVED MY LIFE BY FALLING ON ME! BUT HOW DID YOU ESCAPE?

A LUCKY FAST MOVE! ONE DART LANDED IN MY METAL-LINED BELT--NO HARM DONE! I'LL PULL IT OUT!

SEEING THOSE SKELETONS NEARLY SCARED ME OUT OF MY MIND!

THE IDEA WAS TO MAKE YOU LESS ABLE TO RESIST DEATH! I'M ON MY WAY TO MOP UP THOSE DEATH-DEALERS!

LATER -- AT FEERCE'S LABORATORY!

...AND WE FINISHED THEM WITH THE DARTS!

TOO BAD THE SUICIDE HAD TO BE INTERRUPTED BY THAT BUSY-BODY! THE "SUICIDES" WERE SO LEGAL! I PREFER LEGALITY SO THAT WHEN MY NAME GOES DOWN IN HISTORY--

HISTORY?

A CYCLONIC ENTRANCE!

CRASH!

SMACK!

WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!

THE ONLY HISTORICAL RECORDING YOU'LL EVER GET WILL BE IN THE ROGUE'S GALLERY!

AH, GOOD!

CRASH!

BRILLIANCE IS OFTEN MISCONSTRUED FOR MADNESS! I AM BRILLIANT—AND WHY SHOULDN'T I BE? HAVEN'T I ABSORBED CENTURIES OF SCIENTIFIC WISDOM? YOU SEE, I AM 1,000 YEARS OLD!

WHAT?

After consciousness returns...

GREETINGS, FISHMAN! YOU SEE, I'VE CHANGED YOUR ENVIRONMENT! YOU'RE IN A SECRET CELLAR ROOM—AND YOU'LL DIE HERE! NO ONE IS GOING TO INTERFERE IN MY PLAN FOR WORLD CONTROL!

WORLD CONTROL? YOU'RE MAD!

In 970 A.D. I WAS A YOUNG SCIENTIST IN ROME, WORKING ON A CHROMA GAS EXPERIMENT, WHEN...

BOOM!

A TERRIFIC BLAST HAD OCCURRED, OUT OF WHICH I ALONE AROSE!

GREAT JUPITER! I—THE ONLY SURVIVOR! HOPING SO LONG WITH CHROMA GAS HAS GIVEN MY BODY SUCH IMMUNITY! I CAN LIVE—ON AND ON!

AND MY LIFE DID GO ON THROUGH THE CENTURIES! I WORKED WITH FAMED SCIENTISTS, OUTLIVING THEM ALL — ACCUMULATING KNOWLEDGE! BUT NOW THE TIME HAS COME TO USE MY KNOWLEDGE TO GREATEST POWER! MY LIFE IS GROWING SHORT, I KNOW —

HOW CAN YOU KNOW IF YOU'VE LIVED THIS LONG?

THESE NEWLY FORMED WRINKLES ARE A WARNING THAT MY BODY IS STARTING TO LOSE ITS SHOCK RESISTANCE! I MAY NOT LIVE MORE THAN 100 YEARS -- SO I MUST LIVE THEM FULLY--AS RULER OF THE WORLD! FOR THIS I AM PREPARING MY ELECTRONIC BOMB!

ELECTRONIC BOMB!

YES! FOR ME THE ATOM BOMB IS ALREADY OBSOLETE! I'VE SPLIT THE ELECTRON! MY FORMULA REQUIRES FIVE METALS, FOUND PLENTIFUL IN EACH OF THE FIVE PROPERTIES I ENCOURAGED MY UNWITTING FRIENDS TO WILL ME! WITHIN TWO WEEKS I WILL BE READY TO STRIKE!

YOU CAN'T STOP ME, FISHMAN! YOU'RE TOO WEAK TO BREAK YOUR CHAINS! I'M GOING TO INJECT LIQUID POISON INTO YOUR VEINS! MY MAN HAS THE CAN OF -- OH, CLUMSY!

As PEERCE'S MINION REGAINS HIS FEET, CANS ROLL OFF THE SHELF, AND HE PICKS UP THE WRONG ONE!

I'M COMIN', DOC!

IN SHORT MOMENTS:

THE INJECTION IS COMPLETE! HE'LL BE DEAD IN 10 MINUTES! WE'LL LEAVE HERE FOR GOOD!

SOMETIME LATER:

HA-LOOO!

IT'S NAMOR! BEHIND THE WALL—YOU MUST BREAK THROUGH!

SUBMARINER! AT LAST—I HAD A FEELING YOU WERE IN TROUBLE!

HOW DID YOU KNOW TO LOOK HERE?

WE FOUND OUT YOU'D MADE INQUIRIES ABOUT DR. FEERCE AT THE LAWYERS'!

AND NOW, IT DOESN'T TAKE ANY FEMALE INTUITION TO TELL ME YOU CAN USE THIS, NATEE BOY!

NOTHING LIKE WATER TO BRING BACK MY STRENGTH! AH—HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN MISSING?

TWO WEEKS!

TWO WEEKS! THEN FEERCE IS READY TO STRIKE! WHAT ABOUT LOMAX?

HE WAS KILLED TWO WEEKS AGO, STRANGLED! WE HAD NO CLUES THEN! DO YOU THINK THAT WAS DR. FEERCE'S WORK?

YES! WHAT'S MORE, HE'S BENT ON MAD DESTRUCTION! NOTIFY HEADQUARTERS TO ALERT FOR AN ELECTRONIC BOMB ATTACK! MEANWHILE, I'M GOING ON MY PERSONAL HUNT FOR THE FIEND!

AN ELECTRONIC— (GULP)—

SOON...

WHAT'S THAT? ROCK LIGHT-HOUSE HAS BEEN ABANDONED FOR YEARS!

IN THE TURRET:

THESE ELECTRONIC BOMBS CONTAIN THE DEADLIEST LOAD EVER CREATED! ONE PULL OF THIS SWITCH LAUNCHES THEM! ONE BOMB WILL WIPE OUT A CITY MORE COMPLETE THAN ANY ATOM BOMB EVER DID! AND NOW—

THE NEXT INSTANT:

SUBMARINER!

AND NOW THE PAY-OFF! LUCKY I LOOKED IN ON THIS!

SOMETIME LATER...

...AND I SENTENCE YOU TO DIE IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR!

NO, NO! HANG ME! DON'T GIVE ME THE CHAIR!

BUT PEERCE AND HIS HENCHMEN GET THE CHAIR!

HE'S DEAD, FINALLY! ALL WIZENED UP NOW, LIKE HE WAS CENTURIES OLD!

HIS BODY WAS LOSING ITS SHOCK RESISTANCE—THAT'S WHY HE DIDN'T WANT THIS TYPE OF EXECUTION! HANGING WOULDN'T HAVE KILLED HIM—HE WAS CUNNING TO THE END!

The End

Miss AMERICA

CHAPTER II

"VANISHING SPIES!"

The story thus far...

* * * * *

MISS AMERICA, SENT TO BUENOS AIRES TO LOCATE A MISSING FEDERAL AGENT AND HIS EXPOSE LIST OF ESCAPED NAZIS, DISCOVERS A DIABOLICAL NAZI PLOT TO GAIN POSSESSION OF A MICRO-FILM FORMULA FOR A SUN-RAY CONDENSER MORE DESTRUCTIVE THAN THE ATOM BOMB! IN A FURIOUS FIGHT WITH GUNMEN, LED BY REX, A NAZI AGENT INTENT ON FOMENTING WORLD WAR III, SHE IS STRUCK DOWN AND THE BRACELET CONTAINING THE SECRET FORMULA ON MICRO-FILM IS STOLEN! NOW, AS REX IS ABOUT TO LEAVE THE DRESSING ROOM OF CAFE-SINGER ELISE WINTERS WHERE THE STRUGGLE HAD OCCURRED----

WE'RE GETTING OUT! WHA—?

DON'T MOVE, ANY OF YOU TOSS THAT BRACELET OVER TO ME. YES, I'VE BEEN OFFERED A FORTUNE FOR IT!

WHY, YOU LITTLE DOUBLE-CROSSER! NOW OUR BUSINESS IS FINISHED!

OH!

THERE'S THE CAR!

NO ONE SAW US LEAVE, AND THE GUN HAD A SILENCER. THAT TRAITOROUS ELISE GOT WHAT SHE DESERVED!

WE'LL BE AWAY IN A MINUTE!

MEANWHILE, MISS AMERICA STIRS, THE EFFECTS OF THE STUNNING BLOW WORN OFF...

HMMM. ELISE SHOT, AND I'M TIED UP! BUT THEY DIDN'T DO A VERY GOOD JOB ON MY HANDS!

SWIFTLY-----

BAH! OF ALL TIMES TO HAVE TROUBLE STARTING THE MOTOR!

SHE'S CONNECTING NOW! HERE SHE GOES!

AND MISS AMERICA IS FREE AT LAST, TO PURSUE HER EXCITING QUEST!

ELISE WINTERS IS IN HER DRESSING ROOM, SHOT! CALL A DOCTOR AT ONCE!

A CAR SPEEDING AWAY! MAY BE PERFECTLY INNOCENT, BUT I CAN'T OVERLOOK ANYTHING, ESPECIALLY WITH THAT DEADLY MICRO-FILM FORMULA AT STAKE! SO HERE GOES!

SOON, ON THE HIGHWAY—

THERE'S ANOTHER CAR FURTHER AHEAD! LOOKS LIKE THIS ONE'S PURSUING IT! I CAN'T TELL WHO IS IN THEM, BUT I'VE A HUNCH REX AND HIS HENCHMEN ARE IN THE *FIRST*, BECAUSE THEY HAD MORE TIME TO GET AWAY!

FIRST CAR'S TURNED. CAN'T SEE IT BEHIND THAT HIGH EMBANKMENT! THE SECOND ONE'S GAINING! SOMETHING INTERESTING SHOULD HAPPEN!

AS THE PURSUING CAR TAKES THE TURN, ITS DRIVER FIRES AT THE TIRES OF THE CAR AHEAD!

AS BULLET-RIDDLED TIRES INSTANTLY FLATTEN, THE FIRST CAR SPINS DIZZILY. THEN---

IT'S HAPPENED SOONER THAN I THOUGHT! THIS MAY BE THE END OF PETE AND HIS CHUMS!

QUITTING THE AIR, MISS AMERICA SILENTLY STALKS HER QUARRY AFOOT---

SOMEONE'S COMING OUT OF THAT CAR! I'LL GET HIM BEFORE HE SNAGS THE BRACELET! THAT'S UNDOUBTEDLY WHAT HE'S AFTER!

IT'S PETER! HANDSOME, SUB PETER, ONLY HE CAN'T TALK HIS WAY OUT OF THIS SO EASILY!

TALK HIS WAY OUT? FOR THE MOMENT, PETER IS PRACTICALLY STUNNED! THE WRECKED CAR IS EMPTY!

NO ONE'S IN THERE ???

YES, IT LOOKS AS IF WE'D BOTH SLIPPED UP THIS TIME, DOESN'T IT?

HUH? OH, YOU'RE MISS AMERICA, AREN'T YOU? YOU SAW WHAT HAPPENED?

I SAW YOU CHASING THAT CAR AND SHOOT THE TIRES. WHOEVER WAS IN THERE MUST HAVE REALIZED THEY WERE BEING FOLLOWED---

---JUMPED OUT AND GOT AWAY WHILE BEING HIDDEN BY THE EMBANKMENT. YOU SHOT AT AN *EMPTY* CAR. THAT'S THE ONLY EXPLANATION I CAN THINK OF NOW *YOU* MAKE WITH THE EXPLANATIONS, ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS HERE! BUT FIRST-----

I'LL TAKE YOUR GUN!

YOU *DO* TAKE A MAN BY SURPRISE! BUT I WASN'T GOING TO TURN THE GUN ON YOU, BELIEVE ME!

YOU STILL HAVEN'T EXPLAINED!

I'M PETER CARR. I WAS AT THE CAFÉ LUXURIA WITH A FRIEND, MADELEINE JOYCE. SHE WENT BACKSTAGE TO SEE ELISE WINTERS. AFTER SOME MINUTES I WENT BACK TOO AND SAW THREE MEN RUNNING AWAY. ONE LOOKED LIKE A MAN MISS JOYCE DESCRIBED AS HAVING ASSAULTED HER AT HER HOTEL

SO I GAVE CHASE!

A LIKELY STORY! I NEVER DESCRIBED MY ASSAILANT TO HIM!

HOW DO I KNOW YOU WEREN'T AFTER A CERTAIN BRACELET CONTAINING A MICRO-FILM FORMULA?—THOSE MEN HAD STOLEN A FORMULA FOR A SUN-RAY CONDENSER OF TERRIBLE DESTRUCTIVE POTENTIALITY!

WHAT? I KNOW NOTHING OF SUCH A FORMULA— PLEASE TRUST ME! OHH, *THAT'S* HOW YOU TRUST ME, EH? WITH A GUN IN MY RIBS!

NOW WALK TO YOUR CAR. WE'RE GOING FOR A LITTLE RIDE— WITH *YOU* DRIVING!

WE'VE DRIVEN MORE THAN FIVE MILES OUT. HOW AND WHEN DO WE END THIS RIDE?

WE END THIS—*NOW*! STOP THE CAR AND GET OUT!

A MOMENT LATER—

COME BACK! I RENTED THAT CAR!

I NOTICED THE RENTAL AGENCY NAME ON IT. I'LL RETURN IT. HAPPY WALK BACK TO BUENOS AIRES! IT'S NOT LIKELY YOU'LL GET A LIFT ON THIS LONELY ROAD! OH, AND YOU MIGHT POSSIBLY NEED THIS!

CATCH!

WELL!

I WANT TO KEEP HIM FROM GETTING TO THE CITY TOO SOON AND POSSIBLY INTERFERING AGAIN. I DON'T TRUST HIM, BUT I CAN'T PUT HIM IN CUSTODY WITHOUT EVIDENCE!

BESIDES, RIGHT NOW I MUST FIND THE MEN WHO GOT THAT BRACELET! ELISE IS MY LINK TO LOCATING REX. GUESS I'D BETTER RETURN TO THE CAFE LUXURIA

BUT AT THE CAFE A SHORT TIME LATER—

I CALLED THE DOCTOR, BUT THE SIGNORINA WINTERS WAS SOME!

THIS WINDOW WASN'T OPEN BEFORE. SHE MUST'VE MANAGED TO PICK HERSELF UP AND OUT THROUGH IT! SINCE ESCAPES HER PLAN, SHE WON'T GO HOME!

SOON----

BUT I'LL TRY HER HOME ANYWAY FOR A POSSIBLE LEAD TO REX'S WHEREABOUTS. THAT IS, AS SOON AS I CABLE COUNTERSPY HEADQUARTERS TO PICK UP MRS. VARNHAM, FOR SHE *DID* GIVE ME THE BRACELET ORIGINALLY!

AT THE SAME TIME, AT AN OBSCURE FARMHOUSE:

YOU'RE LUCKY THE BULLET ONLY ENTERED YOUR ARM. A VERY PAINFUL SPOT. YOU SHOULD REST.

I HAVEN'T THE TIME, DR. AGRAPIA. GET ME SOME STREET CLOTHES, SOMETHING OF YOUR WIFE'S. *HURRY!*

NOT LONG AFTER—

OF COURSE I RUN A RISK TAKING CARE OF THESE—UH—GUN CASES AND NOT REPORTING TO THE POLICE!

STOP WHINING! I KNOW YOU WANT MONEY. HERE'S TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS. I'M GOING NOW. I'VE GOT IMPORTANT WORK!

---VERY IMPORTANT, INDEED! HMMM! THAT COLD-BLOODED REX, LEAVING ME FOR DEAD AND GRABBING THE BRACELET! WHEN I CATCH HIM, I'LL LEAVE *HIM* FOR DEAD---BUT *I'LL* BE **SURE** OF IT!

HE WAS CRAFTY ENOUGH NEVER TO TELL ME THE LOCATION OF HIS HEADQUARTERS, BUT I HAVE A WAY TO—I ***MUST*** GET THAT BRACELET! I CAN SELL IT FOR A ***FORTUNE!*** IF HE THINKS THAT I---OH, I ***DO*** FEEL A BIT WEAK. PROBABLY LOSS OF BLOOD---

WHILE AT ELISE'S APARTMENT---

TOUGH LUCK! I'VE LOOKED EVERYWHERE AND NOT A SINGLE LEAD! WHAT A CAUTIOUS GAL! SHE MUST HAVE ***PLENTY*** TO CONCEAL. NOT EVEN AN ADDRESS BOOK!

I DOUBT WHETHER SHE'LL RETURN HERE. SHE KNOWS *I'M* AFTER ***HER***, AND ***SHE'S*** MOST LIKELY AFTER ***REX*** ---THE DOOR BELL! ***WHO*** CAN THAT BE?

BRRRRING

WHO INDEED?

WHY DON'T THAT DAME ANSWER?

SHE'D BETTER! IF SHE WANTS TO LIVE!

WHO IS THIS SINISTER PAIR? AND WHAT IS THEIR STAKE IN THE DEADLY INTRIGUE? FOR PUNCH-PACKED THRILLS, READ THE NEXT EXCITING EPISODE IN MARVEL COMICS---EVERY MONTH AT YOUR NEWS-STAND!

ONE IN A MILLION

JEFFREY had planned the murder very carefully. He was a methodical man, and he planned to kill in the same methodical way . . . there would be no slip-ups; nothing would go wrong with his carefully laid plans.

His landlady, Mrs. Dean, would furnish the perfect alibi for the perfect crime. What a simple idiot she was! She believed everything he told her. He knew some of the things she had told the neighbors over the back fence, and he could hear her saying, "That Mr. Jeffrey is the *nicest* man. Never have any trouble with him!" If only, Jeffrey thought, she knew the seething volcano of hatred that bubbled and churned within his breast; hatred of his uncle, hatred of Mrs. Dean, hatred of the whole world and everything in it!

But tonight he would even the debt. Tonight he would kill so that he could live in the manner he felt was due him. For Jeffrey wanted to live high, which was practically impossible on the amount of money his uncle paid him for keeping the books for the entire firm. The old skinflint! Jeffrey knew that all the money his uncle had was going to him someday—but when? The old man might live forever. Jeff wanted the money now, so that he could enjoy life's luxuries while he was still young.

Jeffrey picked up his phone and called downstairs to Mrs. Dean.

"Hello, Mrs. Dean. I'm going to be busy for the next few hours auditing some very important books. I wish you'd see that I'm not disturbed by anyone tonight for any reason."

She assured him in her high nasal twang that everything would be as he asked, and he hung up with a sigh of relief. There was his alibi . . . she would never doubt him. If it came to a test, she would swear by all that was holy that he had been in his room all night.

Jeffrey put on his overcoat and hat. He felt the snubnosed .32 automatic bulging in his pocket. It was his uncle's gun; Jeffrey had borrowed it two weeks ago on the pretext of using it as protection against prowlers. Now he was going to use it for another reason—a much better reason. He slipped silently out of the house, using the back entrance. He had left his lights burning, with the books spread out on his desk. He checked his watch—9:30. He could get to his Uncle's house, do what had to be done and be back in less than half an hour.

On the streets a slight, cold drizzle was beginning to sift down. Jeffrey turned up the collar of his coat and pulled his hat further down over his eyes as he walked briskly along the almost deserted street. It took him only seven minutes to reach his uncle's house. He rang the doorbell and waited for what seemed an eternity for an answer to his ring. The drizzle had soaked through his collar and felt icy cold as the drops trickled slowly down his back. Jeffrey shivered.

Slowly the door opened, and the wizened, pinched face that he hated so terribly peered out cautiously.

"Why, Jeffrey, what are you doing here?" Then, suspiciously, "What do you want? If it's money, you know I—" He started to close the door.

"Uncle Denny, how you talk. You know I wouldn't ask you for money." Jeffrey shouldered his way into the room. "No, it's something else I want."

His uncle closed the door and Jeffrey turned toward him.

"I came here tonight for two reasons," Jeffrey said calmly, reaching his hand into the pocket for the gun. "The first, was to return this gun to you." He raised the gun, thumbing off the safety. "And the second, was . . . to kill you."

Uncle Denny's eyes went wide with terror as he saw the gun in Jeffrey's hand, and he stumbled back toward the door. For a moment it seemed as if he might open the door and try to run, then . . .

"Wait, Jeffrey . . . don't! You can't mean that after—"

"Shut up!" Jeffrey said coldly. "Listen to me . . . If you'd been a little more lenient with your money, if you'd been half-way decent to me all these years . . . But no, look how you made me live! In one room, while you—" Jeffrey waved the gun at the richly furnished anteroom in which they were standing.

Uncle Denny went white with fear as he saw the flashing hatred in Jeffrey's eyes, the grim determination on his face. He held out his shaking hands toward Jeffrey as if in supplication.

"Jeffrey, don't!"

But Jeffrey wasn't listening. "You would make me wait until you died. Well, I'm not waiting any longer. I want money and I'm going to have it . . . now!"

He pulled the trigger twice, and the sharp crack-crack of the .32 echoed in the small room.

Uncle Denny moaned softly and went limp at the knees, his hands clasped tightly against his chest. A thin trickle of red ran from the corner of his twisted mouth. His eyes went blank with agony . . .

Jeffrey knelt by the body, lifted one arm and felt for a pulse. There was none. His uncle was dead. Then Jeffrey started to work. He went in the next room, which was a large living room, and kicked a chair over. He ripped some pictures off the wall, and pulled the rug askew. He went out on the balcony, from which a large French window opened into the room, and kicked out several panes of glass, so that the shattered fragments would fall inside the room. Then he stepped back to survey his work.

He was satisfied. The room now looked as though a burglar had come in, had been surprised by his uncle, and a struggle had taken place. No doubt the police would think the burglar had shot his uncle. Jeffrey wiped off the gun, and threw it on the floor beside the huddled body . . .

Once on the street again, Jeffrey drew a deep breath of relief. He had achieved tonight the fulfilment of all his nights of sleeplessness. Nothing would go wrong, nothing could go wrong—he had planned it all too carefully. He looked at his watch—9:45. Only fifteen minutes had elapsed since he had left his room.

As he walked leisurely down the street, he thought back. Had he forgotten anything? He could think of nothing. He passed a large drug store on the corner, one block from where he lived. A large crowd of people was inside. A cup of hot coffee would go good now, he thought, and no one in all this crowd will recognize me or remember that I've been here.

He stepped inside and suddenly he was blinded by a terrific white flash!

When his sight cleared, dimly he could see a man in front of him, grinning and pumping his limp hand up and down. In the background, two men were replacing the flash bulbs in their cameras. A surging mob was laughing and pointing at him.

Destiny had stepped in to rearrange his carefully laid plans.

The man shaking his hand was talking.

"Congratulations! You're the one millionth man to enter this store. You may have your pick of one hundred dollars' worth of merchandise. And tomorrow your name and picture will be in all the newspapers. You're a lucky man. Yes, sir . . . one in a million!"

THE END

YOUNG ALLIES

"DEATH at the WHEEL!"

The YOUNG ALLIES ENTER THE SOAP-BOX DERBY, BUT WHAT STARTED OUT AS A DAY OF FUN, SUDDENLY TURNS INTO A PERILOUS RACE, WITH... "DEATH at the WHEEL!"

THE SOAP-BOX DERBY IS ONLY A FEW DAYS OFF...

WHAT A NIFTY CAR DIS IS TOININ' OUT TA BE! WHATCHA DOIN', TORO?

A BIT OF SPOT WELDIN'S! THIS IS EASIER THAN USING A BLOW-TORCH!

THAT AFTERNOON...

IF I WIN DE RACE I GET A COLLITCH EDDYCATION FER NUTTIN'!

LET'S GIVE IT A TRIAL RUN ON HIKER'S HILL!

LATER, ON THE HILL...

WHAT KIND OF JUNK HEAP IS THAT? MY CAR IS BUILT OF THE FINEST MATERIALS MONEY COULD BUY!

MONEY DON'T MAKE DE WHEELS SPIN, WISE GUY! C'MON, I'LL RACE YA!

YIPPEE! HOW D'YA LIKE DAT PICKUP?

THE RACE ISN'T OVER YET! WHEN I CROSS THE FINISH LINE, YOU WON'T BE IN SIGHT!

KNUCKLES TRIUMPHS!

TRUER WORDS HE NEVER SPOKE! I'M OUTA SIGHT... ONLY IN FRONT OF 'IM!

HE BEAT ME! WHAT KIND OF A CAR HAS HE GOT?

HAW, HAW! NOW D'YA T'INK DIS IS JEST A JALOPY?

ALL RIGHT, SO YOU WON! I WANT TO MAKE A DEAL WITH YOU!

HERE! TAKE THIS MONEY AND KEEP YOUR CAR OUT OF THE RACE. IF I DON'T WIN I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO FACE MY FRIENDS!

WHY, YA LITTLE CROOK! TRYIN' TA BRIBE ME, EH? DIS'LL LOIN YA!

OWW!

THAT NIGHT...

OKAY, WE GET THE IDEA!

HERE'S TWO HUNDRED FROM MY ALLOWANCE. JUST DO THE JOB LIKE I TOLD YOU!

LATER, IN TUBBY'S HOUSE WHERE THE YOUNG ALLIES ARE SPENDING THE NIGHT...

HEY! WAKE UP! SOMEONE'S PROWLING AROUND IN THE YARD!

DA CAR! DEY'RE TRYIN' TA STEAL IT!

HEY! WE'VE BEEN SPOTTED!

OKAY, LET'S GET 'EM! YAHOO!

IN SWIFT SECONDS THE BOYS DRESS, AND...

LOOK... THE GARAGE DOORS ARE OPEN! WE GOT 'EM COLD!

SHHHH! WE DON'T WANT TO SCARE THEM OFF BEFORE WE FIND OUT WHAT'S UP!

GET THE OTHER ONE, TORO!

RIGHT!

YEOW! IT'S THAT FIREBALL KID!

BUT AT THAT INSTANT, TORO'S FOOT HITS A PROJECTING ROCK, AND—

I TRIPPED! WATER! IT'LL PUT MY FLAME OUT!

YOU ALL RIGHT, BUCKY?

YEAH! HE JUST KNOCKED THE WIND OUT OF ME WITH A KICK IN THE STOMACH!

IF I HADN'T TRIPPED INTO THAT WATER, WE WOULD HAVE HAD THAT GUY!

ANYWAY, WE SAVED THE CAR!

NEXT DAY, ON THE WAY TO THE RACE COURSE—

THIS CRATE GETS HEAVIER EVERY MINUTE!

HEY, FELLAS, THERE'S A CAR AHEAD! LOOKS LIKE IT'S STUCK!

NEED A HAND TO GET THIS BACK ON THE ROAD, MISTER?

SURE DO! IF YOU KIDS WILL GET BEHIND AND SHOVE, I'LL APPRECIATE IT!

SUDDENLY THE BUSHES PART, AND—

NOW... TAKE 'EM! GET THAT ASBESTOS SHEET OVER THE FIRE-BOY!

WHAT... LOOK OUT! IT'S A TRAP!

THAT FLAME STUFF WON'T WORK NOW, SONNY, AND THIS'LL CURE YOU OF TRYING!

YOU MONKEYS ARE MAKING US WORK FOR OUR DOUGH... BUT THIS TIME WE'LL DO IT RIGHT!

YOUSE BIG LUGS— OW!

THE OTHER KID'S DONE FOR! GET THESE KIDS IN THE CAR AND WE CAN DUMP 'EM OVER THE BRIDGE!

GOOD TING DIS TREE BROKE DAT FALL! WHAT'S DAT HE SAID?

DERE DEY GO AROUN' DE COIVE! HOW AM I GONNA GET 'EM? SAY... HE RACER! IT'S ALL DOWN HILL!

IF I EVER NEEDED SPEED, DIS IS DE TIME! HOPE I KIN HOLD DEM COIVES WIT'OUT TOININ' OVER!

HEY! A KID IN A SOAP-BOX RACER! AFTER HIM BEFORE HE PILES UP AND KILLS HIMSELF!

The GRADE STEEPENS! KINGPIN'S FOOT PUTS UP SPEED CONTINUOUSLY, AND...

PULL OVER ON THE DIRT, KID!

CAN'T DO IT! I'M CHASIN' SOME MUGS WHO ARE GONNA THROW ME PALS IN DE DRINK AT DE BRIDGE!

Soon...

HE WASN'T FOOLING! THERE THEY ARE AT THE BRIDGE!

A POLICE CAR!

CAREFUL THESE GUYS ARE DESPERATE!

THEY OUGHT TO BE! THEY'RE ALL WANTED AT HEAD-QUARTERS ALREADY!

KNUCKLES RELEASES HIS PALS! THEN...

YOU SHOULD NEVER BURN ME UP LIKE THIS!

NOW START TALKING, YOU THREE!

NO MORE- W-WE'LL TALK!

IT WAS THAT RICH KID, WARREN LEWIS' HE PAID US TO DO IT! WE FIGURED ON MAKING HIS OLD MAN PAY US OFF TO KEEP US QUIET! HE **HAD** TO WIN THAT RACE -HIS FATHER PROMISED HIM ONE GRAND IF HE DID!

WE'LL TAKE OVER NOW, BOYS!

LATER, JUST BEFORE THE BIG RACE STARTS...

YOU! HOW DID YOU GET HERE?

TELL YA LATER... AFTER I WIN DE RACE!

NOW TA ATTEND TA SOME UN-FINISHED BUSINESS!

THE WINNER... AND IN RECORD TIME!

AND AT THE END OF THE COURSE...

REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YA I'D DO IF YA TRIED ANY MONKEY BUSINESS?

YOU LET ME ALONE!

DIS IS WHAT I MEANT!

AND TO THINK MY OWN SON WOULD DO A THING LIKE THAT! I'LL FIX HIM!

THANKS, FELLOWS, FOR NOT PRESSING CHARGES AGAINST WARREN! IN THE FUTURE I'LL MAKE SURE HE CHANGES HIS ATTITUDE!

The PROUDEST MOMENT IN KNUCKLES' LIFE!

AND IN ADDITION TO THE TRUST FUND FOR YOUR COLLEGE EDUCATION, YOU ARE ALSO AWARDED THIS CUP!

(GULP!) TANKS!

THE END

THE ANGEL

HERE IS THE STRANGEST STORY EVER TOLD! THE STORY OF A MILD-MANNERED, LITTLE GUY CALLED FOUREYED LOUIE AND OF HIS WEIRD GIFT THAT WAS WORTH HIS WEIGHT IN GOLD TO A GANG OF AMBITIOUS SAFE-CRACKERS! IT IS ALSO THE STORY OF THE *ANGEL*, NEMESIS OF THE UNDERWORLD, AND OF A QUIRK OF FATE THAT THREW THIS ODDLY MATCHED PAIR TOGETHER, IN—

"THE CASE OF THE X-RAY EYES!"

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3 A.M., AND A GROUP OF AMBITIOUS, BUT DISHONEST, CITIZENS PREPARES TO DO ITS NIGHTLY STINT OF HARD LABOR—

HEY, SCRATCH! IS THIS THE PLACE WE'RE GONNA CLEAN?

YEAH! BRING THE CROW BAR! WE'LL NEED IT TO BUST THE LOCK ON THE GRILL!

I GOT THE LOCK, SCRATCH!

THERE'S A GUY HEADIN' OUR WAY! HE'LL SEE US WHEN HE PASSES! I'LL GRAB HIM!

GIMPY POUNCES ON THE LONE PEDESTRIAN!

W-WHAT-(GULP) IS THE MEANING OF THIS OUTRAGE?

TAKE 'IM INSIDE! WE'LL LET 'IM GO AFTER WE ROB THE SAFE!

IT'S ALL SOUPED UP AND READY TO GO OFF!

YOU TWO GENTLEMEN ARE WASTING YOUR TALENTS ON THAT VAULT! IT ONLY CONTAINS TWO DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS!!

HUH? HOW D'YOU KNOW?

I CAN SEE IT!

HA! HA! SAY! ARE-YOU TRYIN' TO MAKE A MONKEY OUTA ME? I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU LATER! BLAST IT, GIMPY!

YOU'LL BE SORRY!

BOOM!

WE BEEN ROBBED! THERE'S ONLY THREE DOLLARS HERE!

I DIDN'T COUNT THAT FIFTY CENT PIECE! IT'S COUNTERFEIT!

HEY! THIS IS A PHONY!

YOU! HOW'D YOU SEE INSIDE OF THAT SAFE?

I'M GIFTED WITH UNUSUAL EYESIGHT— X-RAY EYES!

YOU GOT...? WHAT WAS THAT YOU SAID?

X-RAY EYES! I'VE HAD THEM SINCE I RECEIVED A HEAD INJURY AS A CHILD! THE DOCTORS SAID SOMETHING ABOUT A SHOCK TO MY NERVE SYSTEM!

SAY! I GOT PLANS FOR YOU AN' US--BIG PLANS!

YOU MEAN...? OH, NO! I--I COULDN'T DO THAT! I'M AN HONEST MAN!

ON THE NEXT FEW DAYS, THERE IS A SERIES OF MAJOR ROBBERIES---

HA, HA! ANOTHER COUPLE OF WEEKS OF USING LOUIE'S X-RAY EYES AN' WE CAN RETIRE! WE'LL BE RICH!

MEANWHILE, THE ANGEL TAKES AN INTEREST IN THE AFFAIR---

FIVE MAJOR SAFE ROBBERIES IN FOUR DAYS, AND ALL APPARENTLY BY THE SAME MOB! HMM....

IT'S TIME THE ANGEL DID A LITTLE PROWLING!

SO IT IS, THAT THE ANGEL PATIENTLY PROWLS THE CITY NIGHT AFTER NIGHT...

HMM--- I'LL BET THOSE FOUR CHARACTERS AREN'T APPLYING FOR A LOAN! COULD BE THE MOB I'M LOOKING FOR!

THEN, INSIDE THE FINANCE COMPANY OFFICE ---

GET GOIN' ON THAT SAFE! LOUIE SAID IT WAS LOADED WITH DOUGH AN' LOUIE *NEVER* LIES, *NOT* IF HE KNOWS WHAT'S GOOD FOR 'IM!

OH, DEAR, IF ONLY I HADN'T TOLD THEM ABOUT MY EYES!

SOMEONE IS IN THE ALLEY! OH GOOD! IT'S THE ANGEL!

THE (GULP)... WHAT?

ANGEL! LET'S GET OUTA HERE!

WAIT! HE DIDN'T SEE US YET! DOUSE THAT FLASHLIGHT AN' SCATTER! WE'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM!

AND AS THE ANGEL ENTERS---

FREEZE, ANGEL! YOU'RE COVERED!

YEAH! AN' FOR KEEPS, SNOOPER!

DEAR ME! HOW CAN YOU SHOOT THE ANGEL WITHOUT BULLETS? YOUR GUN IS EMPTY, YOU KNOW!

WHA---? ULP! OWW!

NOW WE'LL SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO *WITHOUT* A GUN!

UGH!

I GOT 'M, SCRATCH! LET'S GET OUTA HERE!

OHHHH! WHAT A WALLOP! THEY MUST HAVE— HUH?

HAVE THEY GONE?

BACK WITH LOVE

WHY DIDN'T YOU LEAVE WITH YOUR PALS?

PLEASE, SIR! DO NOT ASSOCIATE ME WITH THOSE CRIMINALS! REMEMBER, SIR— I SAVED YOUR LIFE! TAKE A LOOK AT THAT GUN!

IT'S LOADED! BUT WHY DO SCRATCH TAKE YOUR WORD THAT IT WAS EMPTY? AND HOW DID YOU GET MIXED UP WITH THIS GANG?

HANDLE WITH CARE

LOUIE RELATES HIS STRANGE TALE TO THE ANGEL!

...AND THAT IS THE WAY IT WAS! OH, DEAR! I'M THE MOST UNFORTUNATE OF CREATURES!

HMM! A STORY LIKE THAT WOULDN'T SOUND SO GOOD IN COURT, BUT I'LL GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO PROVE THAT YOU'RE TELLING THE TRUTH!

YOU'LL REJOIN THE GANG AND TELL THEM YOU GAVE ME THE SLIP! WHEN YOU LEARN OF THE NEXT JOB, YOU'LL --

AN HOUR LATER AT THE GANG'S HIDEOUT --

LOUIE! OUR GOLD MINE'S COME BACK! HOW'D YOU GET AWAY FROM THE ANGEL?

I HID BEHIND A PACKING CASE UNTIL HE WAS GONE! I HAD TO COME BACK, GIMPY! I'M BEGINNING TO LIKE THIS LIFE OF -- ER-- CRIME!

THAT'S THE TICKET, LOUIE! AN' NOW THAT YOU'RE BACK, WE CAN PLAN OUR NEXT JOB!

THE NEXT EVENING, THE ANGEL GETS A PHONE CALL --

I GET IT! CAPITOL JEWELERS ASSOCIATION! IN A COUPLE OF HOURS? I'LL BE THERE!

HEY! WHAT WUZ KEEPIN' YOU SO LONG?

ER-- I HAD DIFFICULTY CHOOSING THE RIGHT BRAND OF VITAMIN PILLS!

BAH! LET'S GET STARTED!

LATER --

IS IT WOITH CRACKIN', LOUIE?

YES! IT'S PACKED WITH TREASURE AND SOME CARELESS PERSON FORGOT TO LOCK IT! SEE?

ACE SAFE CO.

HEY! IT IS OPEN! THIS IS EASY ...

NOT TOO EASY!

OH!

OUCH!

DEAR ME! ONE DOESN'T DO SO WELL IN CRIME, DOES ONE?

THAT'S AN UNDER-STATEMENT, LOUIE! WATCH OUR FRIENDS WHILE I CALL THE POLICE!

YOU DOUBLE-CROSSER!

OOOH!

YOWW!

YOU SAY YOU CAN SEE **WITHOUT** YOUR GLASSES NOW, LOUIE? GOOD! THAT BLOW ON THE HEAD RETURNED THEM TO NORMAL!

MY SIGHT'S DIFFERENT, TOO! I CAN'T SEE **THROUGH** THINGS! I'M GLAD!

THE END

Free ATOM BOMB SHOULDER PATCH

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Collect Shoulder Patches Worn in Battle By Our Famous Fighting Outfits

Here is an amazing opportunity to collect rare and famous U. S. and foreign military patches worn by our fighting men, our allies and our enemies in every quarter of the globe. Imagine how proud you will be to own and display patches worn by our Ground Forces, Air Forces, Navy and Marines in the "Battle of the Bulge", on Guadalcanal, Leyte, Okinawa, North Africa and in the skies over Germany and Japan. You can have the famous patch insignia of the 20th Air Force (B-29 Superforts), Ranger Battalions, 101st Airborne of Bastogne, and hundreds more, all available in official sizes, designs and brilliant colors. You receive absolutely free with this introductory offer the rare Atom Bomb patch.

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To start your collection, the Patch King has selected from the hundreds of rare and beautiful patches in his tremendous store rooms, 20 of the most fascinating and exciting designs. Every patch in this special collection of 20 represents some famous fighting outfit whose world-shaking exploits were making headlines just a few months ago. You will be amazed that such a wonderful hobby can be started so inexpensively, so excitingly. This special Patch King assortment is offered at the amazingly low price of only $1.00. If you were to buy each patch individually from our catalog, they would cost you more, and more amazingly yet, you get FREE the Atom Bomb patch and our complete illustrated price list and catalog of hundreds of rare foreign and U. S. patches.

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See these exciting patches and insignia at once, in your own home, at absolutely no risk. Send the dollar now and get our specially selected Patch King specials plus the free Atom Bomb patch. If you are not absolutely thrilled with these beautiful patches, you can return them within 10 days for full refund. In addition, you will receive absolutely free of extra cost the beautiful big catalog showing hundreds of U. S. and allied patches.

SEND FOR CATALOG

If you prefer to select your own patches, then you may send for our catalog and price list without purchasing the special introductory package of 20 patches. Simply enclose 10¢ with the coupon and we will rush the catalog to you immediately. If you buy the 20 Patch King specials now for $1.00 you get this catalog free plus Atom Bomb patch.

ALL OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED

American and allied patches are not imitations or samples. They are the actual patches, all unbrutalized, made for actual use by our fighting men and those of our allies. Enemy patches are copies from actual samples brought home as souvenirs by our returning G.I.'s.

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- ☐ Rush my 20 Patch King Specials plus free Atom Bomb patch and catalog. C.O.D. I will pay postman $1.00 plus postage on arrival.
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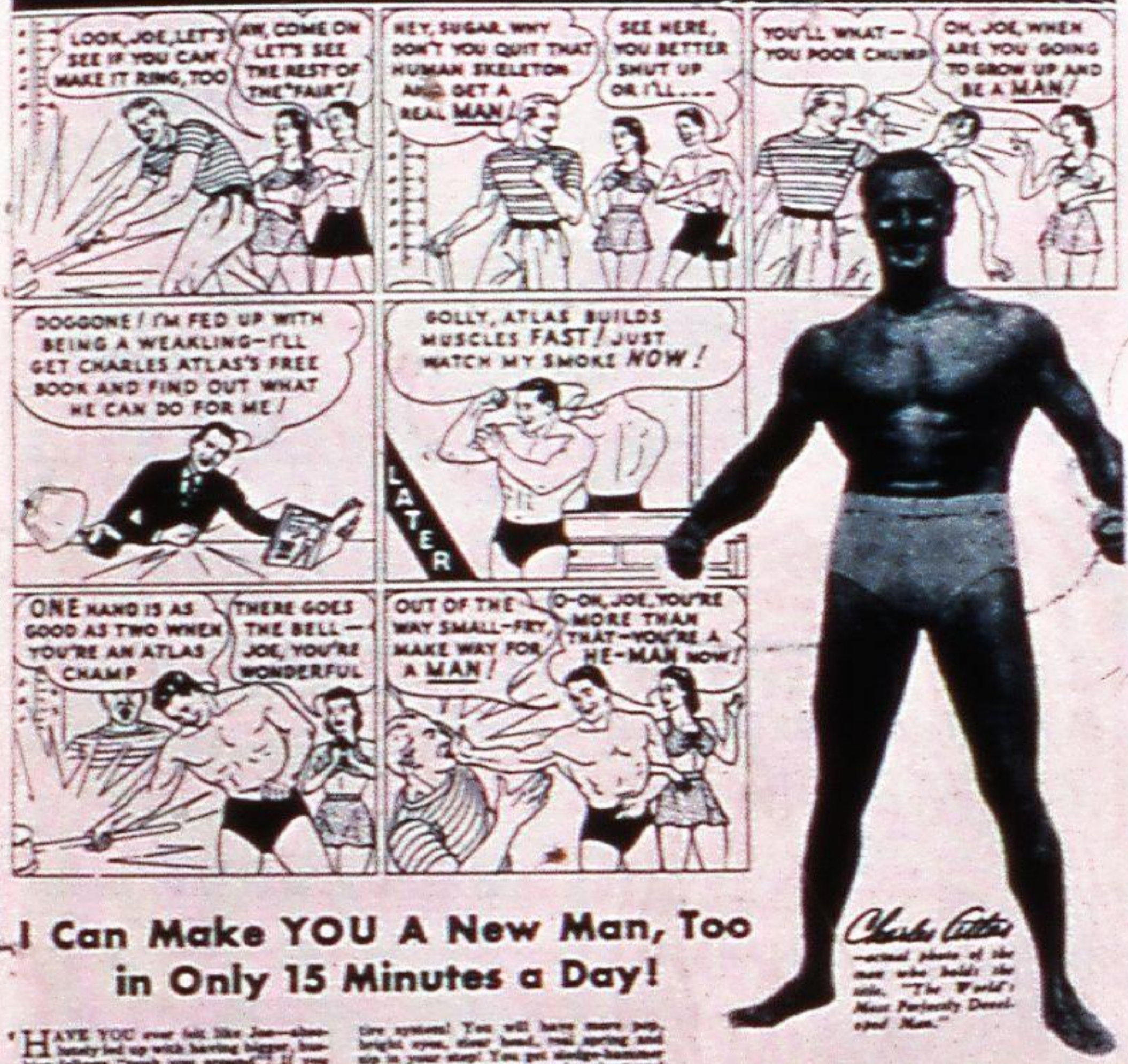
The Insult That Turned a "CHUMP" *Into a* CHAMP


LOOK, JOE, LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN MAKE IT RING, TOO
AW, COME ON LET'S SEE THE REST OF THE "FAIR"!
HEY, SUGAR, WHY DON'T YOU QUIT THAT HUMAN SKELETON AND GET A REAL MAN!
SEE HERE, YOU BETTER SHUT UP OR I'LL...
YOU'LL WHAT — YOU POOR CHUMP
OH, JOE, WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO GROW UP AND BE A MAN!
DOGGONE! I'M FED UP WITH BEING A WEAKLING — I'LL GET CHARLES ATLAS'S FREE BOOK AND FIND OUT WHAT HE CAN DO FOR ME!
GOLLY, ATLAS BUILDS MUSCLES FAST! JUST WATCH MY SMOKE NOW!
LATER
ONE HAND IS AS GOOD AS TWO WHEN YOU'RE AN ATLAS CHAMP
THERE GOES THE BELL — JOE, YOU'RE WONDERFUL
OUT OF THE WAY SMALL-FRY, MAKE WAY FOR A MAN!
O-OH, JOE, YOU'RE MORE THAN THAT — YOU'RE A HE-MAN NOW!

Charles Atlas
—actual photo of the man who holds the title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

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HAVE YOU ever felt like Joe—ashamed, lonely and up with having bigger, huskier fellows "push you around"? If you have, then give me just 15 minutes a day! I'LL PROVE you can have a body you'll be proud of, packed with red-blooded vitality!

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Using "Dynamic Tension" only 15 minutes a day, in the privacy of your own room, you quickly begin to put on muscle, increase your chest measurements, broaden your back, fill out your arms and legs. This easy, NATURAL method will make you a finer specimen of REAL MANHOOD than you ever dreamed you could be!

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Thousands of fellows have used my marvelous system. Read what they say—see how they look before and after—in my book, "Everlasting Health and Strength."

Send NOW for this book—FREE. It tells all about "Dynamic Tension," shows you actual photos of men I've turned from puny weaklings into Atlas Champions. It tells how I can do the same for YOU. Don't put it off! Address me personally: Charles Atlas, Department 60L, 115 East 23rd St., New York 10, New York.

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115 East 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y.

I want the proof that your system of "Dynamic Tension" will help make a New Man of me—give me a healthy, husky body and big muscular development. Send me your free book, "Everlasting Health and Strength."

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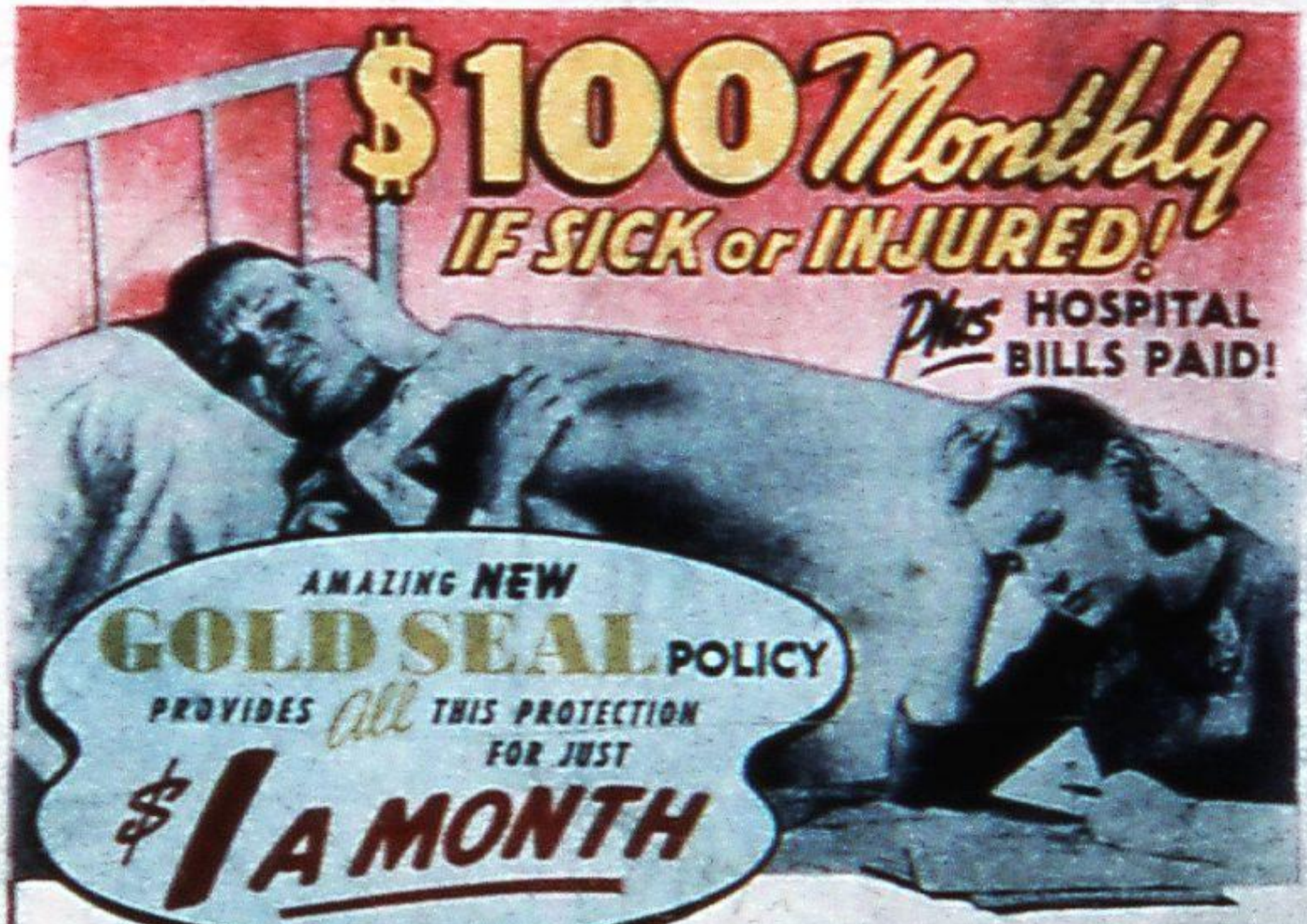

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